

Nicolás Ariel Kass

Wildlife and Conservation Scientist

nkass@fcnym.unlp.edu.ar | La Plata, Argentina
ORCID 0000-0001-9245-8796 | Google Scholar | ResearchGate
t3.com.ar | linkedin.com/in/nicolaskass | github.com/nicolaskass

PROFILE

Biologist (Zoology) and PhD candidate in Natural Sciences, with sixteen years of continuous work in wildlife ecology and conservation: spatial ecology, population dynamics, sampling design and applied statistics on my own field data. I have worked under international monitoring protocols (CCAMLR's CEMP, five and a half months in Antarctica), co-lead a Conservation Leadership Programme-funded initiative for endemic lizards, and have taught Vertebrate Zoology at university level since 2010. Reviewing other people's ecological reasoning is routine work for me: in manuscripts, theses and reports.

EXPERIENCE

- since 2017 **PhD Candidate — Researcher** – FCNyM-UNLP, La Plata / Meseta de Somuncurá
*PhD in Natural Sciences, researching spatial ecology, population dynamics and conservation of the Somuncurá frog (*Atelognathus reverberii*).*
- Planned and carried out the thesis fieldwork on the Somuncurá Plateau, with capture-mark-recapture campaigns on amphibians.
 - Four thesis-derived manuscripts in preparation: morphometrics, population dynamics, micro-habitat and regional distribution.
 - Estimated abundance and apparent survival with a Bayesian capture-mark-recapture model (Pollock's Robust Design) implemented in Python.
- since 2010 **University Teaching Assistant (graduate level)** – FCNyM-UNLP, La Plata
Continuous teaching in Zoology since 2010: General Zoology (2010-2017) and Zoology III: Vertebrates (since 2011), plus General Ecology (2016-2017). Paid student-assistant positions from 2014; unpaid in Vertebrates until 2023.
- I teach the practical sessions of Zoology III: Vertebrates, covering fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.
 - Led groups of 10 to 15 students on field campaigns in the Iberá Wetlands (2013-2016), teaching sampling techniques for birds, reptiles and amphibians.
 - Designed and taught outreach workshops for children on invertebrates, dinosaurs and herpetology for eight years (2006-2014).
 - Taught Vertebrate Zoology unpaid for twelve years, until obtaining a paid position in that course in 2023.
- 2018–2019 **Field Technician** – Instituto Antártico Argentino — Programa Antártico Argentino, Base Esperanza, Antártida
Pre-campaign and 2018/2019 Antarctic Summer Campaign, Ecosystem Monitoring group (CEMP/CCAMLR).
- Applied standardized CEMP sampling protocols to census Adélie and Gentoo penguins and to survey seabirds and marine mammals.

RESEARCH

- since 2023 **CLEFAM — Conservation of Endemic Lizards of Famatina** – CLEFAM
Co-founder and co-leader, Initial funding: CLP Future Conservationist Award, 15,000 USD (2023)
Transdisciplinary conservation initiative, co-founded and co-led with Camila Kass, to study and protect three endangered, endemic lizard species from the Famatina mountains (La Rioja, Argentina): *Liolaemus dicktracyi*, *Liolaemus famatinae* and *Phymaturus mallimaccii*, threatened by open-pit mining projects. Includes field research, engagement with local communities, and original outreach material (CLEFAM book, first edition 2025).

- since 2017 **Spatial ecology, population dynamics and conservation of *Atelognathus reverberii*** – FCNyM-UNLP
PhD candidate, UNLP doctoral fellowship (Apr 2018 – Mar 2024, including extension)
- 2023–2024 **Protecting the threatened Thorntail Mountain Lizard and its habitat in Famatina mountains, Argentina** – Conservation Leadership Programme
Co-leader, CLP Future Conservationist Award, 15,000 USD
Own project on *Phymaturus mallimaccii*, co-led with Camila Kass. It was the founding project of CLEFAM (Conservation of Endemic Lizards of Famatina).
- 2018–2019 **Ecosystem Monitoring Program (CEMP/CCAMLR)** – Instituto Antártico Argentino
Field Technician, Argentine Antarctic Program
Base Esperanza, Antarctic Peninsula. Adélie and Gentoo penguin census.
- 2016–2019 **Systematics, Anatomy, Biogeography, Ecology and Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles of the Southern Cone of South America** – FCNyM-UNLP
Participant, Incentive Program, FCNyM-UNLP
UNLP – 11/N823. Director: Prof. Jorge Williams.
- 2012–2015 **Systematics, biogeography and ecology of amphibians and reptiles of the Southern Cone of South America** – FCNyM-UNLP
Participant, Incentive Program, FCNyM-UNLP
UNLP – 11/N690. Director: Prof. Jorge Williams.
- 2014 **Outreach work-experience grant** – FCNyM-UNLP, Secretaría de Extensión
Grant recipient, Outreach work-experience grant, FCNyM-UNLP
Development of outreach workshops for children within the "Vacations with Dinosaurs" cycle.
- 2013 **Scientific vocation grant** – Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional, Museo de La Plata
Grant recipient, Inter-University Council
Ornithology Section, Vertebrate Zoology Division. Director: Dr. Diego Montalti. Project: Morphometric analysis of Brown-hooded Gull (*Larus maculipennis*): sexual differences.
- 2013 **Undergraduate work-experience grant** – FCNyM-UNLP, Museo de La Plata
Grant recipient, FCNyM-UNLP
Ornithology Section, Vertebrate Zoology Division. Director: Dr. Diego Montalti. Project: Functional morphoanatomy of the skull of Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* and its quantitative relationship with feeding preferences.
- 2012 **Scientific vocation grant** – Consejo Interuniversitario Nacional, Museo de La Plata
Grant recipient, Inter-University Council
Ornithology Section, Vertebrate Zoology Division. Director: Dr. Diego Montalti. Project: Functional morphoanatomy of the skull of Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* and its quantitative relationship with feeding preferences.
- 2012 **Undergraduate work-experience grant** – FCNyM-UNLP, Museo de La Plata
Grant recipient, FCNyM-UNLP
Ornithology Section, Vertebrate Zoology Division. Director: Dr. Diego Montalti. Project: Comparative osteology of Brown Skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus*) and South Polar Skua (*S. maccormicki*): conventional multivariate and morphometric techniques.
- 2009–2011 **Cenozoic seabirds of South America and Antarctica: anatomy, functional morphology and evolution** – FCNyM-UNLP
Intern
Directors: Dr. Carolina Acosta Hospitaleche and Dr. Diego Montalti. Main activities: preparation of skeletal samples for osteological collections.
- 2008–2011 **Systematics and biogeography of amphibians and reptiles of the Southern Cone of South America** – FCNyM-UNLP
Participant, Incentive Program, FCNyM-UNLP
UNLP – 11/N569. Director: Prof. Jorge Williams.

FIELDWORK

- 2017–2020 **Somuncurá Plateau (Río Negro) — doctoral thesis campaigns** – FCNyM-UNLP. Doctoral researcher
My own thesis campaigns on the Somuncurá spotted frog (*Atelognathus reverberii*): capture-mark-recapture, microhabitat surveys and threat recording.
- 2018–2019 **Antarctic Summer Campaign (Base Esperanza, Antarctic Peninsula)** – Instituto Antártico Argentino, Programa Antártico Argentino. Field Technician
December 2018 – March 2019. Ecosystem Monitoring group campaign (CEMP/CCAMLR). Activities: Adélie and Gentoo penguin census, bird and mammal counts.

- 2018 **Antarctic Summer Pre-campaign (Base Esperanza, Antarctic Peninsula)** – Instituto Antártico Argentino, Programa Antártico Argentino. Field Technician
September – December 2018. Ecosystem Monitoring group pre-campaign. Activities: Adélie and Gentoo penguin census, bird and mammal counts.
- 2016–2017 **Talampaya National Park (La Rioja)** – FCNyM-UNLP, Proyecto Doctoral. Doctoral researcher
60 days total in 15-day campaigns. Activities: transects, live-pitfall traps for studying lizard community ecology. Part of Lic. Camila Kass's doctoral project.
- 2015–2017 **Somuncurá Plateau (Río Negro)** – Proyecto de conservación de *Pleurodema somuncuriensis*.
Researcher
21 days total in 7-day campaigns. Activities: conservation actions for Valcheta frog (*Pleurodema somuncuriensis*) and preliminary studies on Somuncura spotted frog (*Atelognathus reverberii*).
- 2016 **La Plata (Buenos Aires)** – FCNyM-UNLP. Teaching Assistant, General Ecology
1 day. Teaching field ecology methods.
- 2013–2016 **Iberá Wetlands (Corrientes)** – FCNyM-UNLP. Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, Zoology III
50 days total in 10-day campaigns. Led groups of 10–15 students. Activities: teaching bird, reptile and amphibian sampling methods.
- 2011 **Victoria (Entre Ríos)** – Proyecto de investigación Dr. Mariano Bonomo. Archaeological campaign participant
10 days. Archaeological campaign for Dr. Mariano Bonomo's research project.
- 2010 **La Ventana Mountain Range (Buenos Aires)** – FCNyM-UNLP. Herpetology student
8 days. Fieldwork and sampling of amphibians and reptiles.
- 2009 **Monte Hermoso (Buenos Aires)** – FCNyM-UNLP. Herpetology student
8 days. Fieldwork and sampling of amphibians and reptiles.
- 2008 **Iberá Wetlands (Corrientes)** – FCNyM-UNLP. Student
10 days. Learning sampling techniques for vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals).
- 2008 **Punta Indio (Buenos Aires)** – FCNyM-UNLP. General Ecology student
1 day. General Ecology fieldwork.
- 2001 **Río Colorado (Río Negro)** – Proyecto doctoral Dr. Luciano Prates. Archaeological campaign participant
15 days. Archaeological campaign for Dr. Luciano Prates's doctoral project.

PUBLICATIONS

- Published
- 2023 Romano V, Berrueta PC, Saghessi D, Kass NA, Campos L. Second meeting of grant-holders and thesis students of the Facultad de Ciencias Naturales y Museo. *Revista del Museo de La Plata*, 8(1):1R-14R. doi:10.24215/25456377e017r
- 2022 Kacolis FP, Berkunsky I, Acosta JC, et al., Kass NA, et al., Williams JD. Current threats faced by amphibian populations in the southern cone of South America. *Journal for Nature Conservation*, 69:126254. doi:10.1016/j.jnc.2022.126254
- 2022 Espinoza-Carniglia M, Jacinavicius FC, Bassini-Silva R, Silva-De La Fuente MC, Kass N, Montes M, Moreno L, Lareschi M. A new species of Hannemania (Trombidiformes: Leeuwenhoekiidae) parasitizing the endemic and endangered frog, *Atelognathus reverberii* (Anura: Batrachylidae) from Argentinian Patagonia. *Zoosymposia*, 22:97. doi:10.11646/zoosymposia.22.1.55
- 2021 Silvestro AM, Santos MM, Juárez MA, Libertelli M, Hidalgo KE, Kass NA, Casaux R. First record of White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*) at Esperanza/Hope Bay, Antarctica. *Polar Biology*, 44(3):631–635. doi:10.1007/s00300-021-02828-1
- 2020 Kass NA, et al.. Spatial ecology, population dynamics and conservation of the Somuncura spotted frog. *Investigación Joven*.
- 2020 Kass NA, et al.. A thesis during pandemic: being a grant-holder in ASPO context, common problems and solutions. *Investigación Joven*.
- 2019 Kacolis FP, Velasco MA, Kass CA, Kass NA, Simoy MI, Grilli PG, Martinez-Aguirre T, Di Pietro D, Williams JD, Berkunsky I. A management strategy for the long-term conservation of the Endangered sand-dune lizard *Liolaemus multimaculatus* in the Pampean coastal dunes of Argentina. *Oryx*, 53(3):561–569. doi:10.1017/S0030605317000849
- 2018 Kass CA, Kass NA, Velasco MA, Williams JD, Kacolis FP. Inventory of the herpetofauna of Talampaya National Park in Argentina. *Neotropical Biology and Conservation*, 13(3):202–211.
- 2018 Kass N, Montalti D, Acosta Hospitaleche C. Comparison of the skull of Brown Skua (*Catharacta antarctica lonnbergi*) and South Polar Skua (*Catharacta maccormicki*). *Polar Biology*, 41:1049–1053. doi:10.1007/s00300-018-2268-7

- 2017 Kass CA, **Kass N**, Calvo R, Castillo M, Torres A, Juri MD. Aurivela longicauda (Red-tailed Teiid). Predation. *Herpetological Review*, 49(2):325-326.
- 2017 Arellano ML, Velasco MA, Quiroga S, Kass CA, **Kass N**, Kacolis FP. Livestock management and dam removal allowed the recovery of an aquatic habitat for endangered frog and fish species in Argentinean Patagonia. *Conservation Evidence*, 14:67-67.
- 2017 Kass CA, Rusconi M, **Kass N**. Liolaemus cuyanus, Liolaemus darwini, Liolaemus olongasta, Liolaemus riojanus. Ectoparasites. *Herpetological Review*, 48(3):650-651.
- In preparation
- 2026 **Kass NA**, et al.. Morphometrics of Atelognathus reverberii. *Ichthyology & Herpetology*.
- 2026 **Kass NA**, et al.. Bayesian capture-mark-recapture, Pollock's Robust Design. *Ichthyology & Herpetology*.
- 2026 **Kass NA**, et al.. Microhabitat of Atelognathus reverberii. *Ichthyology & Herpetology*.
- 2026 **Kass NA**, et al.. Regional distribution and habitat suitability. *Ecological Solutions and Evidence*.

CONFERENCES AND TALKS

- 2020 Pristidactylus fasciatus (Burmeister, 1861): primer registro de la especie para el Parque Nacional Talampaya en la provincia de La Rioja, Argentina. *XI Congreso Chileno de Herpetología*, Chile. Talk.
- Another threat for the Somuncura spotted frog, Atelognathus reverberii (Ceí, 1969): the jagüeles, even dry, keep threatening the species. *XI Congreso Chileno de Herpetología*, Chile. Talk.
- 2018 Conservation of the Somuncura spotted frog (Atelognathus reverberii). *XIX Congreso Argentino de Herpetología*, La Plata. Talk.
- Preliminary analysis of diversity of sand-dwelling lizards in Talampaya National Park. *XIX Congreso Argentino de Herpetología*, La Plata. Talk.
- Management actions for conservation of the Somuncura frog. *XIX Congreso Argentino de Herpetología*, La Plata. Talk.
- 2017 Reptiles of Talampaya National Park, La Rioja. *VII Jornadas de Jóvenes Investigadores y Extensionistas*, La Plata. Talk.
- Lizards of Talampaya National Park, La Rioja. *VI Jornadas Científicas de Estudiantes Investigadores*, Chilecito. Talk.
- Conservation actions for Valcheta frog in an aquatic environment of Somuncurá Plateau, Río Negro. *XVIII Congreso Argentino de Herpetología*, Salta. Talk.
- 2013 Sexual dimorphism in gulls Larus dominicanus, Chroicocephalus maculipennis and C. cirrocephalus. *XV Reunión Argentina de Ornitología*, Santa Rosa. Talk.
- Videoendoscope: a helpful tool in the search of Squamata in hibernation sites (3rd place). *Sigma Xi Student Research Showcase*, Carolina del Norte, EE.UU. (virtual). Poster.
- 2011 Acromyrmex ant nests as possible hibernation sites for squamates in the "El Destino" reserve, Punta Indio, Buenos Aires. *IV Jornadas de Jóvenes Investigadores, I Jornadas de Jóvenes Extensionistas*, La Plata. Talk.
- Use of videoendoscope in Acromyrmex ant nests for searching squamates. *VI Encuentro Anual Biólogos en Red*, Mar del Plata. Talk.
- 2010 Use of discriminant analysis to differentiate Brown Skua from South Polar Skua. *XIII Congreso y 9nas Jornadas de Educación de la Sociedad de Ciencias Morfológicas de La Plata*, La Plata. Talk.
- Ecology and conservation of vertebrates through different case studies. Environmental modifications and biotic interactions. *Centro de Graduados "Osvaldo Bottino", FCNyM-UNLP*, La Plata. Talk.
- 2009 Geometric study of the skeleton of Brown Skua and South Polar Skua. *XIII Reunión Argentina de Ornitología*, Taí del Valle. Talk.
- Application of sampling methods and statistical analysis for avifauna of La Plata (Buenos Aires) and surroundings. *XIII Reunión Argentina de Ornitología*, Taí del Valle. Talk.
- Learning while playing: Workshops for children in natural sciences. *VI Congreso Iberoamericano de Educación Ambiental*, San Clemente del Tuyú. Talk.
- Lecture series on research projects related to the study of Vertebrates. *III Jornadas de Jóvenes Investigadores*, La Plata. Talk.
- 2008 Cold blood, scales and much more. *IX Congreso Argentino de Herpetología*, San Luis. Talk.
- 2004 Insects as food for humans. *Museo de La Plata*, La Plata. Talk.

EDUCATION

- since 2017 **PhD in Natural Sciences** – FCNyM, UNLP
in progress
Spatial ecology, population dynamics and conservation of *Atelognathus reverberii*.
- since 2016 **Specialization in University Teaching** – UNLP
all coursework passed except one course and the thesis
- 2006–2016 **Degree in Biology, Zoology track (Licenciatura)** – FCNyM, UNLP
graduate

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

- 2022 **CLP Reunion — in-person training** – Conservation Leadership Programme (FFI / WCS / BirdLife International)
In-person, South Africa, as a member of Federico Kacoliris's team. Modules: Leadership, Project Management, Stakeholder Engagement, Communication.
- 2020 **Conservation Management & Leadership (CML), online course** – Conservation Leadership Programme (FFI / WCS / BirdLife International)
8 weeks, fully remote, as a member of Federico Kacoliris's team (Pleurodema somuncurens). Modules: project planning and logframe, fundraising, leadership, behavior change, gender in conservation.
- 2019 **Tools for developing management and conservation projects** – CONICET
- 2018 **Introduction to Remote Sensing (SoPI)** – CONAE
Level 1, SoPI virtual classroom.
- 2018 **Geographic Information Systems (GIS): theory and practice** – FCNyM-UNLP
- 2018 **Fundamentals of R** – FCNyCS-UNPSJB
- 2017 **Introduction to methods of scientific knowledge** – Facultad de Ciencias Exactas, UNLP
- 2017 **Philosophy and logic of evolutionary biology** – FCNyM-UNLP
- 2017 **Species distribution models: objectives, implementation and interpretation** – FCNyM-UNLP
- 2016 **Modeling in natural sciences. Data, parameters, estimation and simulation** – FCNyM-UNLP
- 2012 **Applied morphometric applications in biology, biological anthropology, archaeology and paleontology** – FCNyM-UNLP
- 2011 **Introduction to morphometric studies in paleontology** – Asociación Paleontológica Argentina, FCNyM-UNLP, CONICET
- 2009 **Workshop: Techniques for capture, handling and banding of raptors** – XII Reunión Argentina de Ornitología
- 2008 **BIRDS: Contemporary strategies for the study of form** – FCNyM-UNLP

TEACHING

- since 2018 **Zoology III: Vertebrates** – FCNyM-UNLP · Graduate Teaching Assistant, part-time (9 h/week)
Current position. Interim since 2018; paid since 2023.
- 2017–2018 **Zoology III: Vertebrates** – FCNyM-UNLP · Graduate Teaching Assistant, unpaid
Interim position, unpaid.
- 2016–2017 **General Ecology** – FCNyM-UNLP · Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, part-time
By competitive exam.
- 2014–2017 **General Zoology** – FCNyM-UNLP · Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, part-time
Interim position.
- 2011–2017 **Zoology III: Vertebrates** – FCNyM-UNLP · Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, unpaid
By competitive exam, unpaid position.
- 2010–2014 **General Zoology** – FCNyM-UNLP · Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, unpaid
By competitive exam, unpaid position.
- 2013 **Biology Module, Introductory Course** – FCNyM-UNLP · Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, part-time
By competitive exam.
- 2013 **Undergraduate complementary activity: Zoology III** – FCNyM-UNLP · Instructor
Taught 9 hours.

AWARDS

- 2023 **Future Conservationist Award** – Conservation Leadership Programme (15.000 USD)
Project on *Phymaturus mallimaccii*, co-led with Camila Kass; it gave rise to CLEFAM (Conservation of Endemic Lizards of Famatina).
- 2017 **Young Researcher Grant, UNLP** – Universidad Nacional de La Plata (17.000 pesos)
For doctoral thesis field campaign.
- 2013 **3rd place, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology** – Sigma Xi Student Research Showcase
- 2011 **Distinguished presentation by evaluation committee** – VI Encuentro Anual Biólogos en Red
Presentation: Use of videoendoscope in *Acromyrmex* ant nests for searching squamates.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Everyday tools Linux, Bash, Claude Code, Git/GitHub, LaTeX, Quarto, Markdown, HTML
Data and statistics Python, R, NumPy, SciPy, pandas, Bayesian inference and MCMC, capture-recapture models, non-parametric methods

LANGUAGES

Spanish Native
English Advanced: reading, writing and conversation
German B1 (certified)
Italian Basic